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Georgia Southern University



Men's Basketball Releases 2017-18 Schedule

A tournament in Florida and a cross-country road trip highlight the slate.

Marc Gignac

Men's Basketball

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STATESBORO – To improve at anything, you have to challenge yourself. It's a philosophy Georgia Southern men's basketball coach [Mark Byington](#) believes in wholeheartedly, and it's reflected in the 2017-18 schedule he has put in front of his team.

"We have an experienced team that has a chance to be good so we decided to challenge them with a very difficult schedule, which will help us prepare for the Sun Belt Conference games," said Byington. "Last year, we played four games against teams that won their league and three teams that played in the NCAA Tournament. It might even be more difficult this year."

The Eagles will play non-conference games against three teams that won 20-plus games last year and two NCAA tournament participants. A total of four opponents had RPIs inside the top-60, and Georgia Southern starts the season with consecutive games against two of them.

The Eagles open the campaign at Wake Forest Nov. 10 before playing host to Cal State Bakersfield Nov. 13. A home game against Bluefield State begins the Eagles' participation in the Gulf Coast Showcase in which GS plays three more contests in Naples, Fla., starting with a matchup with Missouri State.

Georgia Southern will travel to Bradley Nov. 25 and return home to host Tennessee Wesleyan Dec. 2 and Savannah State Dec. 9. It will be the Tigers' first trip to Hanner Fieldhouse since 2005.

"We are excited to play three home non-conference games in front of our students and also have Savannah State visiting Statesboro," said Byington.

A four-game road trip that will encompass 13 days and 6,057 miles is next on the docket. The Eagles play at George Mason (Dec. 12), Cal State Bakersfield (Dec. 16), Kennesaw State (Dec. 19) and ETSU (Dec. 22) during the stretch.

"The two teams from the Missouri Valley, Bradley and Missouri State, will be at the top of their conference, ETSU won 27 games last year and played in the NCAA tournament, CSU Bakersfield won their league and played in the NIT Final Four, George Mason won 20 games last year and then we get to open up against Wake Forest, who was an NCAA tournament team last year," said Byington. "Our student-athletes will be able to visit Florida, Washington DC, Chicago and Los Angeles so we will have the opportunity to experience a lot of great places along with playing-high caliber teams."

The Eagles' 12-game schedule in Hanner Fieldhouse contains nine Sun Belt contests. The Sun Belt was the 13th best league in the country last season, according to RealTimeRPI, and had six teams with 18 wins or more, counting Georgia Southern. The league's top five scorers, including Georgia Southern's [Ike Smith](#) and [Tookie](#)

[Brown](#), will be back in uniform.

GS returns all five starters and eight student-athletes in the rotation to the 2017-18 roster. The Eagles went 18-15 overall and 11-7 in the Sun Belt and played in the postseason for the first time since 2006.

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In order to expedite entry and provide a safe environment for all patrons and participants, Georgia Southern Athletics has implemented a Clear Bag Policy for all ticketed sporting events, effective Aug. 1, 2017. Fans can find the complete policy as well as an FAQ section at GSEagles.com/ClearBag.

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